

Are There Greek Rephaim?
On the Etymology of Greek *Merops* and *Titānes*¹

Amar Annus, Tartu

In my paper I will deal with a very difficult and complex subject matter, and therefore it seems the best to outline my basic points directly at the outset. Thus my derivations **rp*' > Greek *merop(e)s* and *diānu* > Greek *titānes* rest on the following grounds:

- 1.1. The absence of any convincing etymologies for the Greek words *meropes* and *titānes*.
- 1.2. The presence of the West-Semitic word *mrp*' "healer" in the name of the Greek island Kōs - *Akis/Meropiē* (Astour 1965).
- 1.3. The Greek word *merops* can be demonstrated to have the meaning "healer, healing" in some parts of the Greek tradition.
- 1.4. Such a meaning of the Greek *meropes* and its appearance in the epic formula *meropes anthrōpoi* can only be fully explained and understood against the background of the Ugaritic and Biblical Rephaim.
- 2.1. Ugaritic *qbs dn* and *rpi ars* are parallel expressions and both denote (the clan of the) "royal ancestors" and "(mythical) warriors" (cf. *da-at-nu* = *qar-ra-du*] in *CT* 18, 7).
- 2.2. Both can be historically considered as Sutean sub-clans (cf. *di-ta-nu* = *su-tu-u/ū* and *ti-id-nu* = *a-mur-[ru]* in *mal'ku* = šarru I, 235 and VIII, 122).
- 2.3. The "last king of the Rephaim", Og in the Hebrew Bible, is paralleled both by 'Rpu, king of Eternity' in Ugarit and by the legendary Boeotian king Ogygos in Greek (Noegel 1998), who is occasionally called "the king of Titans" in some parts of the Greek tradition. The first ruler of Cos and eponymous ancestor of *meropes* was comparably named *Merops*.
- 2.4. The chain of equations WS *diānu* = Sumerian (*gud-jalim* > Akkadian *kasarikku* can be safely established and logographic writing for the last word GUD.DUMU.⁴UTU "Bison-son of the Sun" can only be fully understood in comparison to the solar associations of the Greek words *Titan*, *Titānes* and *Tithonos*.

¹ The author is indebted to prof. dr. Jaan Puhvel for the indispensable aid he gave to me while writing this essay, and to the participants of the Seminary for Semitics at the University of Helsinki (prof. T. Harviainen) as well as to other scholars, who have read my paper and from whom I have gained a lot

The etymology of the early Greek term *merops* is not sufficiently clear. The notion that it is a compound adjective derived from μέποιαι ὄρνις or from the gloss of Hesychios ὁ τὴν μεμεποιμένην ἔχων τὴν ὄρνα ("one dividing the voice"), include only secondary folk-etymologies. This paper tries to show a West-Semitic origin for this word.

Michael Astour has shown that *Meropie*, the second name of the Greek island of Cos (1965: 245), Merops, the oldest mythical king of the island and parallel names *Akis* // *Merop(i)ē*, the parallel names of the island of Siphnos, derive their names from West-Semitic *m'rappe* "healer" (*ibid.*: 247).

Astour explains the myth preserved by Antoninus Liberalis (in Μεταμορφώσεων Συνοψωγῇ 15.):

"the oldest king of the island [Cos] was *Merops*; after the sudden death of his wife, the nymph Echeameia, slain by Artemis, he attempted suicide, but was changed by Hera into an eagle, and placed in the sky as the constellation *Aquila*. ... His son Eumelos and the three children of the latter worshipped only the Earth and did not recognize any other gods; they insulted Hermes, Athena and Artemis, who visited them, and were therefore changed into birds. Worshipping the Earth alone is an obvious relic of the chthonic nature of the entire Meropid family" (Astour 1965: 247).

Eumelos was changed into νυκτικόροξ κακὲγγελας ('evil-potent owl'), with which LXX translates Hebrew *kōs*. (cf. Horap., II, 25: *Nyktikorax betokens death; for it suddenly descends on the broad of crows at night-time, even as death strikes suddenly.*)²

The Babylonian Semitic tradition of ominous birds (eagle, falcon, owl) which was also part of the magico-medical practice, had according to Astour penetrated into Greece. The word *merop(o)s* already occurs on a Mycenaean tablet, as the personal name *Marpijo* on KN Dd 1296B (PN Μαρπόφιος?) shows.³ The attitude toward Babylonian *eššepu*-owl "was dual: like the spirits of the dead, whom the owl personifies, it is considered both a giver of abundance and an object of fright" (Astour 1965: 244).

In the ancient Greek epic tradition one finds the designation Μῆλνρὸς τε Κῶος τε πῶλιν μερότρον ἀνθρώπων (Hymn. Hom. Ap. 42), so applied to the 'earthborn' original inhabitants of Cos and Miletus, whose eponymic ancestor was the king Merops. These Meropes are "yokels" of the earth, like the "bee-eaters" of the same name, and without any relation to the Olympians, who

² νυκτικόραξ θάνατον σηματοῖν· ἄφνω γὰρ ἐπέρχεται τοῖς νεοοοῖς τὸν κορονὸν κατὰ τὰς νύκτας, ὅς ὁ θάνατος ἄφνω ἐπέρχεται.

³ The personal theophoric names containing the root *rp* is attested already in Ebla, see *i ištāk in Ia I ištāa di Ebla* (ed. I. Caeni) 1981, 206 (*Su-mi-ra-pa* = WS *šmrp*).

are dwelling on the earth (Papaioannopoulos 1968: 104).⁴

Cos' first ruler was a healer by name.⁵ Similarly the Hebrew *r'phaim* and Ugaritic *rpum* are kings of yore and the ghosts of the Netherworld. As in the case of Hebrew Rephaim:

"Their name puzzled scholars; they could see no relationship between spirits of the dead and the notion of medicine, implicated in the root of their name *raphā* 'to heal,' whence *rophē* 'physician.' There were proposals to derive their name from the root *raphā* 'to be weak, to go down,' which was believed to indicate the weakness and immateriality of the shadows in Hades. But there is no need to distort the root, depriving it of its radical aleph. Those who are amazed by the etymology of Rephaim from *raphā* simply do not understand the organic association between the notions of the Nether World - the chthonic cycle - and of healing, i.e. granting health, strength, fertility, and fecundity" (Astour 1965: 233-34).

There exists an alternative tradition, which assigns the parental rights of Machaon not to Asclepius, to the healer-god of Greeks, but to a certain Merops (Schol. Il. 4,195: *Μέγανος δὲ οὔτος ὁὗτος Ἀρκάδιου καὶ Ἀπολλωνίος ἡ Κορονίδος, κατὰ δὲ τίνος Ἡρώνης τῆς Μέπορος* (Dindorfius 1875: 179)). *Merops* as a bird-name (today named *Merops apiaister* by zoologists and μέροψ by Greeks or "bee-eater"), occurs even in the form Μερποῦς (Ἀρκούδιος Μέπορος) as personal name in Sicily: "Da gr. tardo (I-II sec.) μέροψ 'gruccione (uccello)' (Caracausi 1990: 376). This seems to share again the Ugaritic conception of *rpum*:

"The common ancient Near Eastern conception of the spirits of the dead taking the physical form of birds is also attested in the literature of Ugarit. The *rpum* are described as fluttering (*ndd*); they are startled like birds (*ndd* D-stem). Apparently they were believed to come like birds to the holy place to enter the company of the gods." (Spronk 1986: 167.)

So they are represented as birds. And *rpum* "arrive on threshing-floors and plantations. It is also an indication of the *rpum* being described as birds: they come to place where they can feed." (*ibid.*: 168.) And they can also be called "kite" (*dy*; KTU 1.108:8, (*ibid.*: 196)). And quite similarly changed Aristophanes in his comedy "Birds" all giants into birds.

⁴ "Cés Méropes sont des "culs-terreux," tournés vers la terre, comme les guépriers du même nom... et sans rapports avec les Olympiens qui sont au-dessus de la terre."

⁵ Forbes 1990: 236: "What is clear is that he is not primarily a bird hero in the sense of someone invented to explain a particular bird... It would therefore be possible for one bird to be substituted for another or even for the apparent meaning of his name [=bee-eater] to be ignorant altogether."

We can now summarize the typological similarities between the West-Semitic conception of Rephaim and the Greek epic formula *meropes anthrōpoi*. *Meropes* have been supposed to be the original inhabitants of Cos and Miletus, as Rephaim refer in the Hebrew Bible to a race of Canaanite giants who inhabited the land before the Israelites; the same is the case with Ugaritic *rpum*. According to Alexander Polyhistor (preserved in Eusebius *Præp. Ev.* IX 17,2) the founders of the city Babylon and its first inhabitants were giants who survived the flood and subsequently lived in the tower. But when the 'energy' of the God was withdrawn from them, the giants started to live on the Earth in 'diaspora'.⁶

The Ugaritic conception of *rpum* may seem very unsystematic to us, and for the sake of clarity I offer Spronk's summary (1986: 195), only omitting the indications to the texts: "we may conclude that *rpum* is a name for the deified royal ancestors who are called up from the netherworld, where they live like shades. They are revived with Baal to take part in the New Year Festival celebrating Baal's return to life. Therefore, Baal can be called first of the *rpum*." (Spronk 1986: 195.) This shows that *rpum b'1* in Ugarit and *b'1 mnp'* (CIS I, 41) on the Phoenician inscription from Cyprus are only variant names of the same deity i.e. distant members of the same tradition. The Greek hero Bellerophon (from Semitic *b'1 rp'n*) may also belong to this tradition (see Astour 1965: 254ff.).

"As *rpum* the deified dead appear as warriors, but more important seems to be their help as healers and in securing the welfare of the city. They possess healing power like the *rpum par excellence*, Baal, who healed, i.e. revived them. This power, which can also be given to the living king, is the power to overcome death." (Spronk 1986: 195.)

So the living ruler could also be counted among the *rpum* (*ibid.*: 196). This is at least consistent with the Homeric description of *meropes anthrōpoi*, which appears 9 times in *Iliad* (1: 250; 2: 285; 3: 402; 9: 340; 11: 28; 18: 288. 342. 490; 20: 217) and only twice in *Odysseus* (20: 49, 132). For example, in the speech of Nestor (Il. 1: 250), who

"by now had outlived two generations of *meropes anthrōpoi*, .. and still ruled the third. Men like those I have not seen again, nor shall: Peirithous,

⁶ Eusebius, *Præparatio evangelica* IX, 17,2: Εὐπρόλεμος δὲ ἐν τῷ περὶ Ἰουδαίων τῆς Ἀσσυρίας φησὶ, πρῶτον Βαβυλῶνα πρῶτον μὲν κτισθῆναι διασωθέντων ἐκ τοῦ κατακλυσμοῦ εἶναι δὲ αὐτοῦς γίγαντας, οἰκοδομεῖν δὲ τὸν ἰσόροπτον πύργον. Περὶ οὗτος δὲ τοῦτον ὕμνῳ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνεργείας τοὺς γίγαντας διασπάρχειν καθ' ὅλην τῆν γῆν. Surviving the flood may also be the connecting point between Biblical Japheth (Gen. 9: 18-19) and the Greek Titan Iapetos (cf. West 1997: 289-90).

the Lord Marshal Dryas, Caeneus, Exadius, Polyphemus, Theseus, Aegeus, *a man like immortal gods*. I speak of champions among men, who fought with champions, with wild things of the mountains, great centaurs whom they broke and overpowered..." (translation by R.Fitzgerald, my italics.)

In the Ugaritic texts the standard parallel to *rpum* is *ilnym*, "divine ones," in the epics of Aqht the main figure Dnili is called *mt rpi*, which is exact match with the Greek plural *meropes anthrōpoi*. The Standard epitheton *Dnili mt rpi* // *ḡzr mt hrmm*, "Danel, the man of healing, the hero, man of *hrmm*," can be connected with a place name *hrmm* in Lebanon (Spronk 1986: 168). But it

"is also possible to connect *hrmm* with the mountain Hermon, because in a paraphrase of Gen 6: 1-4 the Ethiopic book of I Enoch 6: 5-7 speaks of a certain Danel (cf. Ugaritic Dnili) as one of the fallen angels who descended from heaven to the mountain Hermon to generate the giants. In the Old Testament some of these giants are called Rephaim. It may be assumed that this tradition in I Enoch has its roots in ancient Canaanite religion and that this origin led to a deliberate misreading of **hrmm* (cf. *hrmm* in Amos 4:3) connecting it with *hrm*, "ban." (Spronk 1986: 169.)

This hypothesis seems reasonable and can be supported by Deut. 3: 8-9 that informs of the territories belonging to king Og, the last king of the Rephaim. The mount Hermon is included there and from the Hebrew Bible we know of Baal Hermon (Jud. 3: 3; 1 Chr. 5: 23) who was worshipped on the mountain. Og is associated with Mount Hermon and "Og's demise is explicitly called a "ban" - *hrm*, in Deut. 3: 6-7 (Noegel 1998: 418). In Ugarit there exists a reference to an Og and "to a *Rpu* who was King of Eternity and who, like Og of Bashan, lived in Ashteroth and Edrei" in list of names (*ibid.*: 416).

Greek Titans are also supposed to have their origin in the mountain *Othrys*⁷ in Thessaly (*Theog.* 632). This mountain occurs also in Hellanicus' account of the Deucaion-myth (West 1997: 490). Deucaion and his wife Pyrrha were flood survivors, who subsequently generated a new human race from stones. The name of the mountain varies in the Greek sources, but one tradition has also the name *Othrys*.

"Since these *repa'im* consisted of kings and nobles who fought from horse-drawn chariots, it is only natural that they were remembered as gigantic in stature - a view which might have been reinforced by speculations on the origins of megalithic structures. The biblical tradition would only have gone off the track when the socio-military category was erroneously thought to

⁷ The etymology is unclear. Cf. gloss of Hesychios: ὀθρυοει· τροχό, ὑλῶδες, δασύ, κρημώδες, which as adjective can mean "rugged, rough, harsh, savage, turbid, hoarse" and can have a pejorative connotation as well.

represent an ethnic group. ... it is altogether possible, that the statement that Og, King of Bashan, was among the last of the *r'pa'im* (Josh. 12:4; 13: 12; Deut. 3: 11. 13) is historically correct. This item of traditional lore, along with other similar memories which have not been preserved, probably stands at the very beginning of the development which led to the understanding of *r'pa'im* as an ethnic term." (LHeureux 1974: 273.)

One can, however, only with difficulty differentiate between an ancient race of giants, spirits of the ancestors, and a small ethnos. There exist equations *ti-id-nu* = *su-tu-u/ú* and *ti-id-nu* = *a-mur-fur* in the lexical list *mal'ku* = *šarru* (Lipiński 1978: 108). I disagree with the view that "these equations seemingly mean that the names in question refer to tribal groups from the same area." (Lipiński 1978: 108-8.) I would "translate" these equations "*tidnu* is approximately the same as *sutú*" M. Heltzer in his study on the Suteans has indicated many points in which Ugaritic *rpum* and *dnu* seem to be close to the Suteans (Heltzer 1981: 47)⁸.

"In the early Old Babylonian they were known in southern Mesopotamia as warriors and robbers. They also appeared as prisoners of war and slaves. In the late Old Babylonian period, the Suteans were connected with royal military service, mainly in Sippar, as well as with the service of the cloister-*gâsum*, and various other occupations.... Later still, to the fall of Assyria at the end of the 7th century B.C., the term Sutean became a historical term designating nomadic warriors and tribesmen" (Heltzer 1981: 99).

Akkadographically it occurs in the Hittite texts as ERÍN MEŠ ŠU-TI (= Hittite *lati*), simply denoting (nomad) tribal warriors (Heltzer 1981: 85-86). The Egyptian term Šwṛw (may be cognate for Egyptian Šy.w), which occurs in the execration texts, "refers to a large tract of central and northern Transjordan (the later Bashan) in the first two centuries of the second millennium B.C.E." (Margalit 1989: 338.)

After the Mari period we must look for Suteans in Northern Syria (Heltzer 1981: 51). And they are known from the Num 24: 17, where Bileam mentions Suteans in Transjordan as "sons of *Shet*" in the confines of Moab (*ibid.*: 83).⁹

⁸ Michael Heltzer wants to link Rabbeans from OB Mari with Ugaritic *rpum* in KTU 1. 15.III and KTU 1.161 (1981: 47). This would result in inconsistency in comparing Ugaritic and Biblical Rephaim, and therefore I estimate the real connection of Rabbeans with *rpum* only as a case of folk-etymology!

⁹ It is interesting to note here only in passing that the "sons of *Shet*" were considered by Qumran community as wicked enemies of Davidic Messiah in later Judaism (see J. Collins *The Scepter and the Star* 1995, p. 114), like Suteans in the Akkadian Epic of Erra are enemies of civilized people. On the other hand, the biblical Seth was also considered as the ultimate ancestor of the "righteous ones" (see Klijn, *Seth in Jewish, Christian and Gnostic Literature*, SNT 46, Leiden 1977). I believe that this polemic lies behind the

15th century inscription of the king Idrimi of Alalah refers to "the land of the Sutu warriors" (ERÍN.MEŠ *Su-tu-u*"), "situated on the western fringes of the desert between Emar (Meskene) and Canaan" (Margalit 1989: 339).

In Ugaritic literature Suteans are mentioned in the epic of Aqhatu, where the antagonist of the *mt rpi Dni* is a nomadic Yipn, *mhr šr* – "warrior of the Sutu, Sutean warrior." (Margalit 1989: 337-40) We have already observed the close relationship between the birds and Rephaim, and this fact helps us to explain, why Yipn is chosen and transformed into 'falcon' (*nšr*) or 'kite' (*dy*) (KTU 1.18.IV: 16ff; cf. KTU 1.108: 8) for killing Aqhatu by Anat. It is true, that for "killing mortals she [Anat] has more effective alternatives" (Margalit 1989: 336). The transformation of a Sutean warrior into a falcon is not too miraculous a phenomenon against the background of the mythologem under discussion.

In the epic of Keret Suteans are mentioned as *dnu*, spelled also as *dnu* (Heltzer 1981: 52) and it "must be understood as the *Di/Tidānu* tribe, a part of the common Amorite stock. It is even likely, that this term was used in Mesopotamia at the end of the 3rd millennium to designate the tribes later known as Suteans." (*ibid.*) *Ti/Di-tā/dā-nu(m)* - most possibly "large animal; auroids; strong, wild bovide" - is the "name of the eponymic tribe. Incorporated into Ugaritic literary texts, this tradition survived until the end of the existence of the kingdom", while in 20th - 19th century in Mesopotamia it undergoes a transition from *Ditānu* to *Sutū* (Heltzer 1981: 3-10). After considering the passage KTU 1.15. III, 13-15:

mid. rm. Krt Greatly exalted be Keret
btk rpi ars in the midst of the *rpum* of the earth (country)
bphr. qbs. Dn in the gathering of the assembly of *Ditānu* (*ibid.*)

it may be concluded that *rpi ars* is the ethnic term in this text, which praises the king Keret, the ruler of the *Ditānu*-tribe (*ibid.*), which was the ancestral tribe of ruling dynasty of Ugarit.

In KTU 1.161 *rpi* parallels *dnu*. It appears that *rpi* "are not considered as mere shadows of the dead, but as an ancestral body, closely related with the *Ditānu*. They are mentioned here (in KTU 1.161) as "of the country (earth)" and "ancient" (*qdmym*). So it seems likely that we have one of the ancient tribal names connected with the origin of the people of this kingdom." (Heltzer 1981: 54.)

The only correction I have to add to Heltzer's view is that in the case of *dnu* and *rpum* we are dealing with a mythological entity (mythically heroized historical unit) as well, not purely with a historical one, as can also be inferred from the equation of *da-al-nu* = *gar-ra-[du]* ("hero") in *Cuneiform Texts* 18.7.

One more example of the same phenomenon can be taken from the Egyptian

LXX peculiar translation of Rephaim as *asebon* ("wicked") in Isa. 26: 19, cf. M.L. Brown UF 30 [1998], p. 151-52.

"Story of Sinuhe," where Sinuhe killed the Proto-Goliath of Canaan while dwelling with "Asiatics" (*šty.w*). In Biblical tradition Goliath is a Philistine giant-warrior from Gath, associated also with the ambiguously spelled tribe name *yldy hrph*, (in II Sam. 21: 16, 18, 20, esp. 22) or *yldy hrp'ym* (as in 1. Chron 20: 4, 6, 8), whose "staff of spear was like a weaver's beam," (II Sam. 21: 19) and whose killer by an alternative tradition was Elhanan.

Then it may not be overbold to assume that Greek *Tiānes* originates from the name of the semi-mythological warrior-tribe (in Ugarit) *tdn* - mythically related with *Rpum* in the Ugarit, and once actually tied together with Biblical Rephaim in II Sam 5: 18,22, where we have in some manuscripts Hebrew *rp'm* rendered into LXX as ΤῚῤῥῤῥες.

Let us consider first the equation *alin* = *diānu* (in *MSL* VII, p. 124; VIII/2 p. 18; and *CT* XI, pl. 32, col. iv, 12), which means "bison, bull". Free variant of Sumerian *alin* is *gud-alin*, from which derives Akkadian *kusarikku*, the name of a demonic 'bison-man'. This bison-man is for unclear reasons associated with the sun-god (Wiggermann 1992: 174). The head of the bison (*sag-alin*) is 'emblem of Uru' and he himself is called *gud.dumu.utu* "bison-son of the Sun" or *gud.dumu.an.na* "the bison-son of heaven" (*ibid.*: 176). The solar connections of *kusarikku* can not be explained on the basis of Mesopotamian material. But if we consider the Greek word *titan* and its relatives (Titānes, Tithānos), we find numerous solar associations there as well.¹⁰ Titan, a god of unknown origin, is often identified as Helios (=Sun) in Greek writings, and according to Pausanias, Titan is the brother of Helios (Wüst: 1937: 1486f.). A 5th century Empedokles' fragment 38D, which mentions Τῖτῶν ἡδ' αἰὲρ ὀφύγων περί κύκλον ἄρατρα "Titan sky, whose circle binds all things fast" is the first attestation of the solar mythology of the word Titan, which tradition is continued by Classical Latin poetry, where the Sun is called *ardens Titan* or *fervidus Titan*.¹¹ E. Wüst writes on the word Titan:

"Durch die hier vorgelegten Zeugnisse wird die Ansicht, dass [Titan] schon früher vorkommt [i.e. before Empedokles] gestützt, ... und dass T. oft in Verbindung mit Helios gebracht wird." (Wüst 1937: 1485.) Cf. also Kaibel's opinion: "Titan muss ein ziemlich alter Name für Sonnengott gewesen sein; auch andere als Titanen bezeichnete Persönlichkeiten geben sich mit aller wünschenswerten Deutlichkeit als Hypostasen des Sonnengottes zu erkennen, vor allem Kronos" (*ibid.*: 1485).

¹⁰ For solar references, see Ernst Wüst's articles in *Pauly's Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* VI A, 1937, s.v. *Titan* (cols. 1484-88), *Tiānes* (1491-1509) and *Tithānos* (1512-19), also in the forthcoming volumes of *Der Neue Pauly, Enzyklopädie der Antike*, s.v.

¹¹ Euripides mentions in the play *Helena* (382) a beautiful Μέρορος Τῖτανίδα κοῖνον "Merons' Titanian daughter".

These suggestions can further be confirmed by the exegesis of Hesiod and Homer. So in Hesiod's *Erga kai Hemerai* (109ff.):

Χρόσεον μὲν πρῶτιστα γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
ἀθάνατοι ποίησαν Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες
οἱ μὲν ἐπὶ Κρόνου ἦσαν, ὅτ' οὐρανῷ εἰμβαλόμενοι
ὥστε θεοὶ δ' ἔξωον ἀκηδέα θυμὸν ἔχοντες
νόσφιν ἄτερ τε πόνου καὶ ὄρουμον etc...

(The race of men that immortals who dwell on Olympus made first of all was of gold. They were in the time of Cronos when he was king in heaven and they lived like gods, with carefree heart, remote from toil and misery).¹²

H. Gese has already compared this passage to Ugaritic conception of *rpum*. There is no miserable race of "mortal men" meant here, but we have this *chryseon genos* as "'Heiler" zu bedeuten, da sie Fruchtbarkeit und Lebenskraft verliehen" (Gese 1970: 91). This 'golden generation' is said to have lived in the time of Kronos, which indicates that Titans could be meant with this race.¹³ They are described very much as in Ugarit - *Rpum*... *ilnym* - viz. "divine ones, like gods" and designated as *meropes anthrōpoi*. Comparative examples include Isa. 8:19 where the "dead" (*mtym*) it is said, can be called by someone "gods" (*ilnym*) and Neo-Punic-Latin inscription *l'yl(nm) 'r'p'm = D(is) M(manibus) SAC(rum)* (KAL, no. 101:1).

L'Heureux feels a temptation to translate *ilnym* "as precisely "the ones of El" (L'Heureux 1974: 268) and link it with "the observation of Philo Byblios preserved by Eusebius, that the word for "gods" was related to El just as Greek Kronioi was related to Kronos (Praeparatio Evangelica I, 10,20) (*ibid.*).¹⁴

In Hesiod *Erga kai Hemerai* 143ff. we further read:

Ζεὺς δὲ πατὴρ πρῶτον ἄλλο γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
χάλακτον ποίησ' οὐκ ἀργυρέῳ οὐδὲν ὁμοῖον,
ἐκ μέλαινα, δεινὸν τε καὶ ὀβριζόν etc...

(Then Zeus the father made yet a third race of men, of bronze, not like the silver in anything out of ash made them, a terrible and fierce race.)

We know from Greek mythology about the strong opposition between the giants of Zeus and the Titans of Kronos - so one ancient scholion explains the

¹² I follow M.L. West's translations from Hesiod *Theogony* (Oxford 1966) and *Works and Days*, (Oxford 1978).

¹³ For the *Titan(es)* as the dispensers of fertility, see Wüst 1937: 1487.

¹⁴ Praep. Ev. 1.10.20: οὐ δὲ σύμπαρχοι Ἡλίου τοῦ Κρόνου Ἐλῶντι ἐπεκλήθησαν, ὡς ἄν Κρόνου οὗτοι ἦσαν οὐ λεγόμενοι ἐπὶ Κρόνου.

line 143b: τοὺς Τίταντας καλεῖ - "calls them giants" (Pertusi 1959: 59). An anonymous epic poem *Meropis* (preserved fragmentarily) tells of the Meropes' battle against Heracles (Forbes 1990: 236).¹⁵ Meropes parallel here well with giants, sons of Gaia, who were stirred up by the goddess to fight with the gods, after Zeus had imprisoned Titans in Tartarus. Zeus, who needed then aid of a mortal hero, sired with a mortal woman Heracles, as is related by Hesiodos and Apollodoros (cf. Noegel 1998: 424).

The chthonic nature of Titans, similar to that of the Rephaim, can also be demonstrated on the basis of the Greek texts (see Wüst 1937: 1494). In *Iliad* 14: 274-79 we find a very interesting passage, where Hypnos bids Hera to pray in the name of οὐ ἐνέφθε θεοὶ Κρόνου ἀμύβης ἐόντες (274) - "gods that are below with Kronos" (who had by that time already moved into Hades) and she "failed not to hearken, but swore as he bade and invoked by name all the gods below Tartarus, that are called Titans" (θεοὺς δ'ὀνομάηεν ἀτάρταρας τοὺς ὑποταρταρέους, οἱ Τίτηνες καλέονται). The description of Titans living in the Netherworld with Kronos, who is their king, closely parallel Rephaim (*ypum*) and Og as their king. It is of significance, that Greek Ogygos is also named the king of Titans in some parts of the Greek tradition (see below).

One more argument is that there exist two royal genealogical lists, both in which the name Dītanu occurs, one found from Mesopotamia and one from Syria, which contain Amorite tribal names among the ancestors of the current kings. One of these lists "was written during the reign of Ammi-Saduqa, the tenth ruler of a dynasty that ruled from the Babylon and was to be used during a *kispu*, a funerary offering to the spirits of dead ancestors." (Whiting 1995: 1239.) *Kispu* here is, of course, comparable to Ugartic *marzihu*-feast, in which *ypum* are considered to reveal themselves during the ritual.

The most recent and very important contribution to Hellenosemitical studies is Noegel 1998, which convincingly connects the last king of Rephaim, Og, and king Ogygos, the heroic deluge survivor and legendary founder of Boeotia (whose name has no convincing Greek etymology). The cluster of mythological themes and motives, surrounding both figures can be easily detected from the available sources: Noegel points to the talmudic and midrashic tradition, where the king Og of Bashan "is recorded as having survived the deluge by sitting on the top of Noah's ark" (1998: 414). Both kings are considered as barbarous enemies of the civilized people and its chief God (Yahweh and Zeus) cf. Ps 135: 11; Num 21: 14. Both the king Og and Ogygos have underworld connections and military connections are sheared as well as the theme of 'cosmic battle' (1998: 417).

I can amend the Noegel's theory from my viewpoint as well - virtually all contents of the present study, figuratively speaking, are preserved in a fragment

of the first-century A.D. Greek historian Thallios:

Βῆλον τοῦ Ἀσσυρίαν βασιλεύσαντος καὶ Κρόνου τοῦ Τίτανος Θάλλος μείνηται, φάσκον τὸν Βῆλον πεπολεμηκέναι οὖν τοῖς Τίτασι πρὸς τὸν Δία καὶ τοὺς οὖν αὐτῷ θεοὺς λεγόμενους, ἐνθα φησὶν Ἰκαὶ Ὀργυγος ἡττηθεὶς ἐφυγεν εἰς Ταρτησοῦν, τότε μὲν τῆς χώρας ἐκείνης [Ταρτάρου λεγόμενης, ὡστερ¹⁶] Ἀκτῆς κληθείσης, νῦν δὲ Ἀρτικῆς προσογορευμένης ἣς Ὀργυγος τότε ἡττήε¹⁷.

"When Bēlos was the king of Assyrians and Kronos of the Titans, Thallios had remembered, saying that Bēlos fought with the Titans against Zeus and the other gods, which were supposed to have been with him, saying as follows: 'And Ogygos, having been conquered, fled into Tartessos - this land [was named Tartaros] in that time, [like] now the land, which is called Attikē, was called then Aktē, and which Ogygos ruled in that time.' (Müllerus 1883: 517-518.)

It is extremely important here, that the king Ogygos is mythologically equated with the king of Titans, Kronos! This account of Thallios does not stand alone in the Greek tradition, because the Greek historian Kastor (first half of 1. century B.C.) also names Ogygos as one of the kings of Titans.¹⁷ And, a scholion of Hesiod's *Theogonia* 806 says that "Ogygos was the first king of the gods" Thus it seems that the designations Rephaim/Titanes point to the same direction, as in the instance of Greek Ogygos and biblical Og.

In the present context one should remember (with Noegel 1998: 415) that Genesis 6: 1-4 "the heroes of old, the men of renown" are via Num 13: 33 identified with 'Anaqīn, which in turn are closely associated with Rephaim.¹⁸ In the Greek myth Ogygos is a son of *Gaia Pelōrē*, who is a well-known source of destructive forces, represented by her *gēgeneis* sons, giants and Titans. They all are finally locked up in the Netherworld as punishment (for illicit sexual acts, as thinks Noegel 1998: 415).

The Hebrew roots *rp*' and *rpy* may well be etymologically connected, as

¹⁶ The restoration is based on Niebuhr's proposal (Müllerus 1883: 518).

¹⁷ I cite here Kastor's account (from his lost book *On the Kingship of Assyrians*) for practical reasons in Jacoby's German translation (from *Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker* II B [1929], p. 1132): "Bēlos war könig der Assyrer und unter ihm waren die Kyklopen mit blitzen und flammenden strahlen dem Aramazd, dem mit den Titanen kämpfenden im streit beihilflich. Und könige der Titanen wurden gekannt zu jener zeit; deren einer war Ogygos der könig... die riesen stürzten sich auf die götter und wurden zerschmettert, da hilfreiche bundsgenossen den göttern geworden waren Herakles und Dionkris-os, welche von Titanen waren." (Jacoby's orthography.)

¹⁸ In Jewish exegesis, the "sons of God" in Gen 6:2 were sometimes explicitly equated with the "sons of Shet", see G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology*; Nag Hammadi Studies 24, Leiden: Brill, pp. 125-34.

¹⁵ See H. Lloyd-Jones, P. Parsons (eds.) *Supplementum Hellenisticum*, (1983) 93, pp. 405-8.

shows the ortographical confusion of the words in the Hebrew Bible (s. e.g. in Ps. 60:4, Job. 5:18, Jr. 51:9, 2 Kn. 2:22), where *rp'y* is very often in the place of *rp'*, sometimes also the other way round. Loretz argues:

“Die Forscher nehmen mit guten Gründen an, dass die Schreibung *rp'im* ‘Lahme, Kraftlose’ eine Neuerung darstellt, die vom späteren dogmatischen Standpunkt des Verbotes des Totenkultes aus erfolgte. Ferner kommt hinzu, dass die Rephaim historisiert und als Teil der Urbewölkung des Landes erklärt worden sind” (Loretz 1990: 128-29).

But this is only one possibility to explain the development. To me this seems an overestimation of the role of the “Deuteronomic theology”. As de Moor explains:

“We know for certain that even in the days of the translators of the Septuaginta the original vocalization of the word *rp'ym* was still not forgotten. In two instances where *rp'ym* is evidently a designation of shades, Septuaginta has *ἰατροῦ* [in the Prov. 14: 30 *ἰατροῦς* translates *marpē*]. Because it uses the same word for Hebrew *rōfe'im* “physician,” there is no room for doubt: in an earlier stages *rp'ym* “spirits” was read as *rōfe'im*, in accordance with the ancient Canaanite tradition. But this name became unsuitable for the powerless spirits, and apparently equating the root *rp'* with the root *rph* “to be feeble,” people began to read *r'fa'im* “the feeble ones”” (de Moor 1976: 340-41).

To the present author it seems rather that it is originally quite the same root; ancient heroes/kings/giants can be “feeble” by now, although they are considered to be “granters of fertility” and “healers” at the same time, because of the “dead” having special faculties, available to them by their very condition. (cf. Greek *κοινοῦτες* “the weary ones” for the dead in the passages like II 3: 278 under the Oriental influences (see Puhvel 1991: 9-10) and Od 11: 476 - “phantoms of weary men”).¹⁹ This enables me to tie the Hebrew *teraphim* into the same

complex; for the latter the meaning “ancestor figurine used for necromancy” is also possible, as well as “household deity”.

Now I would like to present an “anthology” of comparisons made earlier between the cult of the Ugaritic *Rpum* and the one of the Greek heroes.

“Striking parallels to these concepts may be found in the Greek hero-cult. A noble and brave man, especially a famous king, could earn the title of *ἥρως* during his lifetime. But only after his death he received true divine status and was worshipped as *ἥρως θεός*. In my opinion it is very significant that these heroized ancestors, who are often depicted as men of unusual height, are also called *ἰατροί*, the exact equivalent of *rapi'ima*.” (de Moore 1976: 336.)

“In mancher Hinsicht zeigen sich Berührungen zwischen diesem *Rephaim*-kult und dem griechischen Heroenkult. Man tritt mit den vorzeitlichen Helden in kultischem Kontakt, um ihrer Kraft teilhaftig zu werden, die besonders als Heilkraft, überhaupt aber als Lebenskraft, Fruchtbarkeit und kriegerische Kraft vorgestellt wird.” (Geśe 1970: 91)

There are some striking similarities between the concepts concerning the Netherworld in Greece and in Ugarit. As king Dānilu wants to meet his son in CTA 22: B and Odysseus, the seer Teiresias in the Hades, both also encounter many other spirits, and the rituals themselves used are quite parallel:

“1) The pouring of drink-offerings into a hole in the ground (Od. XI, 23 ff., CTA 22.B. 24-26). 2) Offerings of sheep (Od. XI, 35), but under normal circumstances also offerings of oxen and rams for the dead (Od. XI, 30, 32f., cf. CTA 22: B 12-14). 3) A description of the souls coming up from the Nether World, among them many brave warriors (Od. XI, 36ff., CTA 22.B 4-10). 4) The ghosts of the dead are compared to a flock of birds (Od. XI, 605f., cf. CTA 22.B.11). 5) Odysseus wants to embrace his mother (Od. XI, 204ff. cf. CTA 22.B.4; compare also XI, 391f.)” (Dijkstra, de Moor 1975: 171-72, see also Puhvel 1991: 25).

There is no doubt that in regard to the *meropes anthropoi*, the accounts in Homer and Hesiod contain only the relics of the conception of ancient Rephaim. The second component in the formula had fossilized the meaning of the first and modified it. The term has undergone some “democratization,” so that in the later Greek epics and drama it has only the meaning “human, mortal, weak,” only in some cases one can hear the echoes of its older meaning (see *Appendix*). Something similar also happened in the Hebrew Bible:

“In the Bible, of course, the majority of references to the *r'fa'im* as shades are not limited to the aristocracy among the dead. The term was democratized in a manner which is not difficult to envisage, so that it came simply to

¹⁹ Quite in the same way thinks B. Margalit of the etymology of *rpw*: “[I]t is best rendered in fact 'hero' or 'champion'. If one insists however on the etymological explanation of *rp'* used in this sense, one can I believe do worse than consider the following possibility... From a basic meaning of *rp'* = “mend, repair”, i.e., connect together that which is broken, severed etc., there develops the idea of ‘intercede on behalf of; establish liaison’. As divinized denizens of the Netherworld, the ancestors have more direct access to the gods than do their living; and therefore often sinful, descendant on Earth. The latter offer sacrifices and prayers; but without the intervention and mediation of the ancestors there is no guarantee that the identity of the earthly worshippers will be known to the gods, or that their case will be forcefully and persuasively taken up on their behalf in time of need. This appears to be the sense of the activity engaged in by DTN/Ditānu in RS 24.272/1.124” (Margalit 1989: 253-54.)

designate the shades of all who had died. To those who had thrilled at the ancient words "may *Kri* be greatly exalted among the *rp'im* of the earth," this would undoubtedly have been regarded as the ultimate indignity." (L'Heureux 1974: 274.)

But at the chthonic level and especially in the cult of healer-gods, the word has evidently retained something of its original meaning "healer". In the inscription, first published by Boeckius,

Ἦγνων ἀπὸ βλεφάρων οκεδάσας εὐχῶν ἐπακοῦε σὼν
μερόπων, οἱ πόλλα γεγηθότες σὸν σθένος, ἥπιόφρων
Ἀσκήτη. (IG 2, 4533.4-7.)

"Having shed sleep from the eyelids, hear the prayers of thy *meropes*, who with much joy propitiate thy might, gentle-minded Asklepios."

In lines 23-25 continues: πανλῶσσα γενῇ μερόπων ἀνεγείφατε
ἐκ καμάτων βαρούλγεια νοῦσον ἀποσαμένων - "waken the all-
tongued meropes from the dead, having shaken off the grievous disease." Editors date this inscription in the second or third century A.D. (IG: 277).

We have attestation of the word with a very similar meaning in Lucianus' *Hadagropodagra* 50. 193. 320. The play is fashioned in Aristophanes' style, with the goddess Podagra (parodising the cult of Asklepios) and the like. Chorus in 192-97:

ὀβριμόθυμε θεα,
κάλυε σὼν ἱερῶν μερόπων ἐνοτιάς.
μέγα σὸν κρᾶτος ἀβιδόφρων Ποδάγρα
τῶν καὶ Διὸς ὠκτὸ πέφικε βέλως,
τρομέει βασιλῆὺς ἐνέφρων Αἰδῶς
(in Macleod's translation: "Goddess dreadful in thy wrath, Hear the cries of
thine own priests (*meropes*). Prosperous Gout, how great thy power! Dread
art thou to Jove's swift shaft, Fearsome thou to Ocean's waves and to Hades
king below.")

Very possibly also in 320ff.:

οὐ γὰρ ἴσον μακάρων ὀργαίς θράσος ἔστι μερόπων,
ὥς Διὸς, ὥς Λετοῦς, ὥς Πολλάδωδος, ὥς Πυθίου,
ἥτιον, ὃ πάνδημε φέροις ἀλγῆμα, Ποδάγρα, κοῦφον,
ἐλαφρον ... etc.,

in the passage, in which is stated 'one is strong, but another (god) is stronger': "For daring boldness of *meropes* cannot match the wrath of blessed gods. Such as Zeus or Leto or Athene, or the Pythian seer. May the pain you bring be gentle, Universal Goddess Gout, light and mild and stingless..." We can learn that *meropes* were not strong enough to match 'the wrath of blessed gods.'

There were some "*meropes of Asklepios*" as we can see. The *Revised Supplement* of Liddell-Scott Dictionary defines these *meropes* as "devotees in relation to a god" (Liddell-Scott 1996: 206). This definition seems to me too "careful" and I propose 'priest of a healer-god (esp. Asklepios)' or 'healer, healing spirit (of a dead person)'. In certain inscriptions one may sometimes find very obscure usages of the word (Hansen 1989: 881, p.277):

οὐτῶνα τοι μερόπων ἄστρον περὶ θεῖον ἄρουρον,
Κάλλιτε, Εὐλάτρου. Κῦζικος ἔοχε πότρυα

θνητῶν ἴσον, ὅσους τε φέρει Διὸς ἀμβροτος αἰὼν
Φοῖβῳ δ' ἐνθά αἰθέρι μνημεῖα πέλ' εἰν ἑταροῖς

"Fatherland Cyzicus held no one of mortals like thee beyond the vast number of *meropes* stars, as many as Zeus's life-giving world sustains. Your memory among friends is thence (like) that of the Sun."

'Ἀστροῶν may be a corruption of ἀνδρῶν, but this may also be a late reflection of the Ugaritic conception of *rpum* - because they can be called "star-gods" (*ilm kbkm*) or "those-of the stars" (*d kbkm*) and "those-of-heaven" (*šmyrn*) (Spronk 1986: 196). One may compare also *Tiiania astra* in Vergil's *Aen.* 6: 721 and "Kaivan (=Saturn), your star-god" in Amos 5:26, "translated" into LXX as *Raiphann*.

From this evidence, one may plausibly suggest a Semitic origin of the Early Greek *meropes*, belonging to the same mythological sphere as the Greek Titans, *merops* being "a warrior" and postmortem "healer", with *Tiianes* originally referring to the tribe or guild to which a warrior belongs. I think we can add these words, at least tentatively, to the list of the many Semitisms in the Greek language and in the Early Greek mentality.

* * *

Appendix

The 4th century B.C. Greek historian Theopompus writes in Book VIII of his history-work *Philippica* (called *Thaumasia* - "On the Miraculous Things") about a wonderland, which lies "outwards of our cosmos" (ἐξω τούτου τοῦ κόσμου). It is inhabited by men of very big size (τοὺς ἀνθρώπους δε τῶν ἐνταῦθα διτλασίονας τὸ μέγεθος) and most miraculous race of Meropes are also there having many big cities (*grt*). At the edge of Meropes' land is a place called Anostos (Of-No-Return, which immediately recalls the Mesopotamian conceptions of the Netherworld), similar to an abyss, which is neither surrounded by darkness nor by light, but covered by air, mixed by 'obscure green'. There are two rivers in that place that flow through it - one is called Passion and the other one Grief. Further Theopompus tells us of the big trees growing on the riverbanks and of miraculous effects of their fruits. The passage is as follows:

"Τὸ δὲ ἐν θαυμασιώτερον προσετίθει· Μέρους τινος οὗτο καλούμενος ἀνθρώπου οἰκείν παρ' αὐτοῖς ἔφη πόλεις πολλὰς καὶ μεγάλας ἐπ' ἐσχάτῳ δὲ τῆς χώρας αὐτῶν τόπον εἶναι καὶ ὀνομάζεσθαι 'Ανοστον, οἰκέναι δὲ χάσματι, κατελθῆναι δὲ οὐτε ὑπὸ σκότους, οὐτε ὑπὸ φωτός, ἀέρα δὲ ἐπικεῖσθαι ἐπυθήματι μειγμένον θολερῷ· δύο δὲ ποταμούς περὶ τοῦτον τὸν τόπον πεῖν, καὶ τὸν μὲν 'Ηδονῆς καλεῖσθαι, τὸν δὲ Ἀύτης." (Müllers 1885: 290.) No doubt, that this vision is influenced by Oriental Netherworld-fantasies!

In some connection with Asklepios, again, one finds the word *meropes* in CIG 5974 (p. 801-802):

A. Τῷ σωτηρι Ἀσκληπιῷ σῶστρο καὶ χαριστήρια Νικομήδης ὁ ἰατρος. Τὰν παιδὸς καλλίσταν εἰκὼ τάνδε // θεοῖο Παιᾶνος κόουρου ματρὸς ἀπ' ἀπυττόκου // δαιδάλλων μεράσων ἐμήσαο σεῖο Βόηθε // εὐπαλάμου σοφῆς μῆμα καὶ ἐσομένους // θῆκε δ' ἑμοῦ νόσον τε κακῶν ξωήρια Νικομήδης καὶ χειρῶν δέγμα παλαιγενέων.

B. Τῷ βασιλεῖ Ἀσκληπιῷ σῶστρο καὶ // χαριστήρια Νικομήδης Στυρνάιος ἰατρος. // Οἷον ἐμαῖώσαντο νέον τόκον Εἰλείθυια // ἐκ Φλεύγου κόουρης Φοῖβῳ ἀκευρόκη, // τοῖόν τοι, Παιᾶν Ἀσκληπιεῖ, σεῖο, Βόηθος // χειρὸς ἀγάμ' ἀγαθῆς τεύξεν ἑας προὔσιν
νεῶ δ' ἐν τῷδε ξωήρια ἀλευάμενος θῆκεν ὁράσθαι // πολλαὶ δαῖς βουλαῖς νόσον // οὓς θεράπων εὐχῆς ὠλήνη δόσιν, οἷα θεοῖσιν // ἀνδρες ἐφημέριοι τῶνδε φέρουσι χάριν.

A. To Savior Asklepios rewards and thank-offerings N. the physician, fashioning this lovely likeness of the divine child, son of Paean from the early-bearing mother. You were mindful of your *meropes*, Helper; a monument of dexterous skill for future men and likewise ransom for evil illnesses N. posted, and a token of far-reaching hands.

B. To King Asklepios rewards and thank-offerings N. the physician. Even as the Eleithyai delivered the newborn from Phlegyas' daughter to unshorn Phoebus, even so, Paean Asklepios, Helper, he fashioned the likeness of your good hand with his skill.

In this shrine he posited thank-offerings to be seen, many times with your counsels averting illness, your servant (making) a small votive gift, such as short-living men bring to the gods in these cases."

Andres ephemerioi is here equated with *meropes*, in the context of magical healing.

This all shows that my theory, presented above, can further be pursued by the careful exegesis and present valuable supplementary information for the

development of the meaning and mythology of the Greek word *merops*.

* * *

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The Ḫapiru in the Amarna Texts

Basic Points of Controversy

Michael C. Astour, Edwardsville

Among the historical "firsts" revealed by the Amarna archive was the frequent appearance of groups of people designated, in syllabic, *ḫa-bi-ru* (which was at the time of the discovery and long afterward normalized *ḫabiru*), and more commonly, in ideographic writing, SA.GAZ or a variant thereof. It was Hugo Winckler who almost at once perspicaciously identified the two writings¹ — an assumption that was fully confirmed by epigraphic finds at Boğazköy made by the same scholar and by the subsequent gradual emergence of more and more pertaining material from other areas. But to this day the largest and the most instructive body of evidence on the so-called Ḫabiru comes from the Amarna correspondence. It is, of course, not my intention to go over, in the very short time limit at my disposal, the whole source material and the full history of the Ḫabiru problem. What I want to do now is to turn once again² to the basics in the century-long discussion of the definition of the term *ḫabiru* (*ḫapiru*) and to the identity of the bearers of that appellation.

The *prima facie* evidence of the Amarna letters on the Ḫabiru³ appeared clear enough. Their presence and activity were reported in every area of Egyptian Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine. They acted in large armed units which were not only engaged in plundering raids but were also seizing for themselves towns and parts of the lands under Egyptian rule. Their violent character transpired in the ideogram by which they were most often designated, SA.GAZ, from Akkadian *šaggašū* "killer, murderer." The same ideogram also stood for *ḫabbānu* "robber" or "migrant" (two aspects of the same phenomenon). The Ḫabiru acted on their own or in alliance with some of the warring petty vassals

Author's note. This paper, minus the notes, was read at the centenary conference of the discovery of Tell el-Amarna, organized by the Middle Western Branch of the American Oriental Society and held at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago in February 1987. The plan of publishing a volume of its proceedings has not materialized. In view of this, and since no relevant new material has emerged in the intervening years, I have now submitted the paper to the *Ugarit-Forschungen* exactly as it was written almost thirteen years ago.

¹ Winckler (1895) 18-19.

² I treated different aspects of the problem in Astour (1958); (1959); (1964); (1970) 123-127, and I gave a concise summary of the evidence and of my understanding of it in (1976).

³ I shall use the traditional spelling *ḫabiru* when dealing with literature prior to 1939 or in direct quotations.